RAGGED SCHOOL UNION QUARTERLY RECORD.

APRIL, 1879.

"NAKED AND YE CLOTHED ME."

THE "gentle Nazarene" who went about doing good was mindful of the *bodies* as well as the souls of the people; and for our instruction and encouragement many instances are recorded of His care for the physical frame, as well as His provision for the spiritual nature. His "feeding the hungry," "giving sight to the blind," "restoring the deaf," and "causing the lame to walk," all bear testimony to His sympathy with humanity and His power to give effect to that sympathy. The secret of this is that "the gentle Nazarene" was "God manifested in the flesh," and "God is love"—not faith, not hope, but charity or love. Love is the essence of charity—doing good to those around us, making a happy country, a happy church, a happy household, a happy home, a happy child. "To do good and to communicate, forget not," is the exhortation of Holy Writ, and then follows the encouragement, "For with such sacrifices God is well pleased." There is a good adage that "Charity begins at home." What use is it to talk about love to mankind, unless it be expressed to those immediately around us? "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" How can we, with any degree of consistency, provide for those far away, while we neglect those near at hand?

We are, however, happy to say that this inconsistency with regard to ragged London has not been general. The unusually long and severe winter brought much of suffering among the poor—the destitute poor; but this suffering was largely mitigated by the food and clothing distributed among them in their hour of need.

It is well for those who have wherewith to bestow of their abundance or to give their "mite," to become their own almoners; but many circumstances prevent the best application of help in this form, and incidents are not wanting to show that indiscriminate charity is often a "means of evil" instead "of good." The response to an appeal, without any consideration, is undesirable and injudicious. Where genuine poverty exists, there, as a rule, will be found the hesitation to make the want known, and our experience has been that those most needing and most deserving help are the last to apply for it; while the systematic and professional beggar is ever at the front with impertinent boldness, submitting his plausible tale, or urging his chapter of distress upon philanthropic sympathy. When friends of the poor cannot be their own almoners it is well to select a medium, willing and able wisely to distribute the alms of donors. In this way we have been receiving, year by year, from some of our friends, quantities of left-off and of new clothing for the poor children in our Ragged Schools, and our acquaintance with the various localities and respective wants enables us to apply this beneficence where the greatest need exists, and where the greatest amount of good is accomplished. Of late years the supply of clothing has fallen off very much; this is unfortunate, for the need for such help was greater last winter than it has been for years. Will our kind friends "consider the poor and needy" in this matter, and entrust us with what they can spare? Gladly will we

undertake to dispense their generosity to the best of our ability.

During the past year many gifts of left-off clothing reached us, besides a large number of new garments, and our grateful thanks are due and hereby presented to the kind donors. The bulk of the garments received last year was made of coloured flannel of various sorts and sizes; strong, warm, and tidy. They were of great and real service, and have benefited children of all ages. A large proportion of the new garments was made expressly for our ragged scholars by a benevolent lady and her friends, from whom we received last year about 400 frocks and petticoats.

The supply for *boys* has been very small; scarcely anything beyond a few new calico shirts and some left-off woollen garments. These were distributed where most wanted, and after the distribution we had to decline several direct applications for further help. Heartily we thank our friends for their sympathy and help for the girls; and may we ask that, in future, a little of this bountiful care be bestowed on the boys? While the snow was thick, and the glass far below freezing point, our stock was made up into a large number of parcels, and sent to the poorest Ragged Schools in the metropolis. The school managers, who have the charge and distribution of these parcels, are so satisfied with the benefit of this peculiar help, that long before the time of allotment comes round, they are applying to us on behalf of their "little ones" for a participation in the bounty. They assure us that the help is fully appreciated, and the gratefulness in many cases is so encouraging that they would not like to lose the power and privilege of annually conferring this little help and favour.

The shape or style of any garment is of little or no concern, and anything of almost any shape can soon be

adapted to the little pinched-up forms by the kind teachers, who are ever ready to make the needed alterations; the ingenuity of some teachers in this direction is perfectly astonishing, and we have had specimens of this adaptation brought to the office for recognition, which, by the way, has been impossible, so phœnix-like has been the transformation.

Among other articles from the wardrobe of a deceased gentleman was a "travelling maud," and a difficulty appeared as to the best use to make of it; the first idea was to hand it over to be used as a "loan-blanket;" but second thoughts led to a different conclusion, and after the judicious application of a pair of scissors and the removal of the moth-eaten parts, *five* young girls were made comfortable in neat, warm check shawls, and two others in warm comforters. Some of the adult clothing, being in a good and serviceable condition, has been given to poor teachers and [workers, and the benefit resulting from this application has been considerable, and the little gifts most gratefully received.

Our friends have thus enabled us, by the kind exercise of their beneficence, to assist in clothing some hundreds of poor children, whose attire was of the most scant description, besides rendering help to those teachers whose means scarcely enable them to provide for their wants. Will not the Master who counts the hairs of the head, notices the sparrow falling, and appreciates the cup of cold water, say of these benefactors of our children and their teachers, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me"?

Gratefully acknowledging all past favours, we do not hesitate to apply to our old benefactors for a continuance of this kind of help; and may we solicit similar aid from other friends, who would, perhaps, readily send it did

they know such help would be acceptable? We can assure them it would be most useful and acceptable, and can promise them a careful distribution at a fitting season.

RAGGED CHILDREN CLOTHED.

BY ANNE BEALE.

LIKE the bursting of spring upon winter and the chorus of song-birds that heralds its march, are the clothing and laughter of the young who were once naked and sad. Hopeful as the budding of the leaves and flowers, and joyous as the bleatings of the lambs in the meadows, are the five hundred and seventy youths and maidens that crowd the platform of Exeter Hall to celebrate the thirty-fourth anniversary of a Union that has brought them nothing but good. They are "an army with banners," for on either side the contingent hangs the ensign of each company, and they are all standards of the Cross. We look on them with admiration and gratitude, for all are prize-winners, and these are but a small portion of the tens of thousands of offspring of the Ragged School Union aforesaid, at this moment in active vitality.

Ragged children clothed are truly a refreshing sight. We have only to carry our imagination backwards a very few years, to behold this clean, smart, bright assembly, dirty, half-clad, and forlorn. Poor they are still, but hopeful. No longer city arabs or gutter children, they make the best of themselves and of the garments they have mended or helped to purchase by means of the penny or farthing banks provided for their savings. Cheerful faces beam beneath many-hued ribbons, and the so-lately withering flowers blossom into a garden of various colours.

It may almost be called a flower-show, since no less than fifty-five Nurseries are represented. Their names are suggestive, for scarcely could the distribution of prizes have a better commencement than in "Amicable Row," or proceed more smoothly than in "Dove Row," or continue its course more agreeably than through "Field Lane," "Grotto Passage," and "Hope Street," until at last it reaches "Victory Place." It is said that riches grow, so we have no less than twenty prizes in "Golden Lane," while only two find their way into "Johnson's Court." What would the worthy Doctor have said to this? However, applause follows each teacher as the books and illuminated certificates disappear amongst the taught; and if the shade of John Bunyan chance to hover near, it would see some hundred illustrated copies of "Pilgrim's Progress" eagerly opened by the delighted recipients. And amongst these are respectable young men and women who, having received the impetus for good in the Ragged School, have obtained and kept various situations for periods varying from one to five years. Rich fruit, this, from the tree of religious knowledge.

After the prizes are distributed, our flower show is suddenly transformed into a kaleidoscope. Each school is distinguished by a pendant as well as flag, varying in colour and shade. This is the programme. At the magic touch of some invisible wand, this programme performs marvellous evolutions. Nearly six hundred of every conceivable colour are held in every possible position, and finally waved simultaneously above the heads of the joyous gathering. The effect is as novel as picturesque, and, like the singing, shows an amount of training almost as remarkable in the "minute as the vast."

The platform before us is often filled with picked

musicians who perform the work of some celebrated master; but scarcely could their finished execution of a grand oratorio create more interest than does the chorus of youthful voices that rises in jubilant hymns or innocent songs to-night. Never did trained orchestra elicit more resolute and rapturous encores than do these once "Ragged" choirs; and the hall is as full as full can be. If the schools had done nothing else but teach the children to sing exultantly the praises of the Lord, or "Oh, let me live a noble life," "Let's dare and do for the pure and true," and the like, instead of the low songs of their class, they would have done a grand work. And the singing is artistic, the conductor having succeeded in producing the crescendo and diminuendo effects, as well as the sustained notes which distinguish more celebrated choirs.

Possibly from among the hundreds of thousands of children thus rescued from degradation the *maestro* or *prima donna* may arise, as the artist has already arisen. The portrait of Lord Shaftesbury, now presented to his daughter, has been executed by one who, it is said, himself stood on that platform to receive the award for good conduct; and who says himself, in the inscription, that "he owes all his success in life to the kind instruction and encouragement received at the King Edward Street School, Spitalfields, of which his lordship has been the president since its opening in November, 1846." This school maintains its character, for we remark that thirty-three prizes are carried off by its pupils. We are not surprised at the deafening cheers and waving of variegated leaves that succeed the presentation, and can well imagine how many young hearts beat with emulation of the success of *him* who stole half-hours from his allotted meals to labour at the art he loved, and receive the thanks of the philanthropic nobleman who is honoured

by the title of "king of the costermongers," and "father of the ragged."

"We are Lord Shaftesbury's boys," said a party of young emigrants, to an officer, who, when travelling in Australia, was struck by their good conduct.

And members of this large and remarkable family may be found all over the world; rescued from destitution, "clothed and in their right mind." Numbers, drafted from training-ships to the royal navy or merchant service, make good sailors; many rise from the rank of drummer-boy in the army to that of corporal or sergeant, and become efficient soldiers. There are instances of young men who return from foreign lands with money sufficient to enable them to enter the ministry, and who devote themselves to the rescue of souls degraded as theirs had once been. Others come home, and maybe bring a wife with them, just to revisit the Ragged School and the friends who helped to raise them "from darkness to light," and then return to the distant clime where they have laid the foundation of fortune and respectability.

Many such have sprung from the Shoeblack Brigade, some scarled-coated scions of which are at this moment threading the mazes of spectators and auditors, carrying piles of the before-mentioned programmes for sale. There is no more interesting sight in London than this little army of busy workers, together with their coadjutors the Messenger Brigade. When we go back in imagination to the Great Exhibition of 1851, and remember that, previously, a meeting of friends of Ragged Schools was held to consider how to utilise some of the pupils in the Exhibition, and that the result was an attempt to teach the juvenile criminal to earn an honest penny by blacking the shoes of the foreigners, we are amazed at the results. We use the word "criminal" advisedly, for the

first specimen worker had been an expert thief. Since that year the boys of the Shoeblack Brigade, to the number of 7,780, have earned the sum of £182,625. But for the Ragged Schools more than that large amount would probably have been paid by Government for their maintenance in prison or reformatory. Now they not only support themselves, but save money; and many an enterprising young red-coat emigrates, or apprentices himself, or otherwise rises in the world, by his own exertions, aided by the committee of the Home. It is said that "Facts are stubborn things," and these cannot be gainsayed.

How the hearts of the voluntary teachers must burn with thankfulness as they survey the fruit of their persevering labour in this once barren field. They, too, are an army, for 2,600 of them work zealously week by week, almost day by day, in maintaining Sunday and Evening Schools, Ragged Churches, Bible and Singing Classes, Children's Special Services, Lending Libraries, Clothing and Shoe Clubs, Penny Banks, Mothers' Meetings, Dorcas Societies, Relief Associations, Bands of Hope, Destitute Children's Dinners, and—crowning delights—lectures, entertainments, and "days in the country." Oh, to be so cared for goes far towards softening hard hearts and turning the sinner from his sin! We cannot wonder at the affection that arises between teacher and taught, which is probably more ardent in the class before us than in any other, because it is the result of hope springing from despair.

> And thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
> What was thy delighted measure?
> Still it whispered promised pleasure,
> And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail."

Yes, it is this many-hued, enchanting hope, and the "promised pleasure," that cheer these young hearts, and

help to keep them true to the right. The Christmas-tree or magic-lantern, with the accompanying delightful tea, rouses the spirits and maintains them in something like buoyancy until the smartening of attenuated garments floats them on with visions of the coming summer treat. Help them, O ye Christian men and women, to this one blissful day of park-land, heath, or maybe ocean. You will elevate and perhaps save many a soul, for no one who had once seen the pale faces of the children kindled into faint colour by the eager hope of a ticket for this one bright day, would say, "Oh, they have too many treats."

If Hope's sunny wings support them, so we may suppose, from the sight before us, do the more exalted pinions of Ambition. To be a unit in this great whole is something; but to enjoy the ample tea provided below, to receive the prize, to listen to the speeches, to survey, from their more elevated point of view, the crowd assembled to do them honour, to be cheered and encored, to be, in short, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes," is vastly more—it is, for the moment, ambition satisfied.

Let the Ragged School Union take courage and pursue its glorious work. While the Board Schools have diminished its day pupils, the Sunday and Evening Classes have increased in numbers since their establishment. Religious instruction will effect what secular education never has and never will. An example is not wanting at this very moment. While these children, numbers of whom are teetotallers, are thus innocently occupied, one of their teachers has fallen in with a crowd of people surrounding a girl of fifteen carrying in her arms a boy of about ten years of age.

"He had some money given him, and has got drunk," was the girl's answer to a question put to her.

No better "Plea for Ragged Schools" could be put forward than this.

But we return, to bid farewell to our "ragged children clothed." Heartily and loyally they sing "God save the Queen." In most concerts portions of our English audiences display their breeding, and disturb the performance, by leaving before the conclusion, but we are surprised to observe that almost the whole of this mighty gathering keep their seats until the end. We are also surprised at the order and quiet of the mass of young people that file out of the hall. As we watch them we wish them and their teachers God-speed, and pray for the Divine blessing on the continuance of this labour of love.—*The Quiver.* *By permission.*

GEORGE STREET SCHOOL AND ITS LATE MISSIONARY.

JOEL MEPHAM was born at Burwash, Sussex, and when twelve years of age he became seriously impressed by a sermon preached in the village church, and used after that to leave his companions for a short time during play hours and retire into the wood, where he would pour out the desire of his soul to the God of all grace. He was regarded as the most promising boy of the school, and, before leaving, chose the calling of a land surveyor. His personal piety was a felt influence, and he led several of his schoolfellows to serious thoughts concerning their salvation.

His father died before he was twenty years of age, and then he went to take charge of Holmshurst Farm, and lived with his grandfather in the house in which his ancestors for five generations had been born and died. Before a week had passed, he prevailed upon his grandfather to allow him to establish family prayer, and this led to the old man's conversion, who died peacefully at the age of ninety-one. The entrance of young Mr. Mepham into the farm was also a blessing to the labourers, as he commenced a cottage meeting among them, which was used to the gathering of souls into the spiritual fold of Christ. At the decease of his grandfather the estate was sold, and Mr. Mepham received a liberal share of the proceeds. For several weeks he was undecided as to whether he should follow his profession of a land surveyor, or seek ordination in the Established Church, when a circumstance occurred which fixed his position in life. The Rector of Stonegate acquainted

him with the work of the London City Mission, and the earnest spiritual work of the Society commended itself to the young farmer. He passed a good examination, and was accepted in 1844. He was appointed to visit in Lisson Grove, and for the long period of thirty-four years he laboured there faithfully and with unabated zeal. A quiet, loving earnestness was the characteristic of the good man. The district was crowded with the wretchedly poor and depraved, one end being an Irish rookery; but he had access to every family.

When he entered upon the district not more than fifteen Bibles could be found in upwards of 600 families; but at his own cost he placed a Bible in each room, and his habit was to ask the people to let him read to them out of their own good Book. His meetings were held in the Ragged School twice a week, and were well attended by the very poor. A Mothers' Meeting of sixty women was conducted by his wife when living, and afterwards by a lady friend. To this he contributed "raw material," and was always present to open proceedings with reading the Scriptures and prayer.

His Local Superintendent writes:—

"He will long be remembered in connection with the old and now defunct George Street Ragged Schools, situate in the lowest part of Lisson Grove. Here, year after year, he taught, Sunday by Sunday, with results which often came to light long after, and cheered him in his later toil. Here, too, during the week he held two meetings—one at eight o'clock on the Monday evening, after a sewing-class previously conducted by his devoted wife, who died at her post some five years since. These meetings were great successes. The poorest of the poor flocked to them, as well as the aged of both sexes, the stairs being not seldom crowded down to the street door. For a long time they were held in two upper rooms, a low fried-fish shop below, a cowshed behind—the resulting atmosphere, when the rooms were crammed, being, as one often present describes it, 'of the most disgusting savour.' In it, however, he laboured on year after year, and beyond all doubt many there had their hearts first opened to attend unto eternal things.

"When these dear old schools, for such they were and are in the memories and esteem of many who in them first learned to believe, were removed to make way for the present School Board schools, the meetings in question were transferred to Earl Street—where, however, a like blessing ceased not to rest on them still. His daily round of house-to-house visitation, on which I often encountered him, absorbed the whole of his remaining time. Visiting as he visited, I nothing doubt, nay, I well know, that he was a daily blessing-bearer to scores of poverty

and sorrow-stricken homes, into which, humanly speaking, light, counsel, needed reproof, timely warning, loving consolation, had no other chance of finding their way. On one of these rounds it was that he was suddenly and fatally attacked by fever, after visiting a deplorable case of cancer, on his return from which he said 'he felt he was poisoned.'

"His end was, unequivocally, peace. He sank rapidly, yet scarcely so fast as he himself desired. I learn that more than once he begged them to withhold his medicine. 'Give me,' he cried 'no medicine, no medicine, I am going home, I shall see His face, I shall see His face.' During one of my own interviews with him I had to counsel care, lest the desire to depart and be with the Lord Jesus should unduly interfere with contentedness to remain a little longer if it were the Divine will. But his joy of faith was none the less most enviable, and on leaving him for what proved to be the last time, I, when closing his little front gate behind me, found myself saying, 'May my last end be like his.' I hear that when just dying he summoned strength to say, pointing upwards, 'I am going there,' and then clasping his hands as if in prayer, fell back into the insensibility of death and so passed hence.

"I doubt if the Mission has ever had to lament the loss of a more spiritually-valuable agent. To be in periodical contact with him as I was for twenty years, was to be permanently identified with a living and breathing incentive, an outward and visible reason of the most irresistible kind for faith in God and attachment to the Mission. 'The Evidences of Christianity' presented in his person and life beat Paley's hollow. He might have been pronounced

'Not one, but every *saint's* epitome.'

"Now he reminded you of Moses, he was so meek; then of John, he was so loving; anon of Nathaniel, he was so guileless; again of Enoch, he so walked with God; and again of Apollos, he was so at home in the Scriptures; yet all the while you saw him to be, in natural respects, a very mediocre and commonplace being, whose *forte* was graces not gifts. In his case more than most was it palpable that wholly by the grace of God he was what he was. As one who knew him long and well, and loved him much, says, 'He was an example of dogged work for God, slow of speech, and with little or no excellence or originality of thought, yet he visited, and prayed, and plodded on, and, in spite of all, won the love of the people, and influenced them much for Christ.'

"Touching 'plodding' by the way, no mill-horse ever led a more monotonous life, yet of the paralysis of routine, even in its most

incipient stage, I never saw in him a trace. If utterly, it was blessedly monotonous. There was an enviable 'sameness' about him under any and all circumstances—a sameness of freshness—a sameness of glow—a sameness of peace and joy—and above all, as well as under all, a sameness of purpose. To listen to his pleadings (for they were more than prayers, at least, than the common run of prayers), or his artless accounts of spiritual experiences on his district, to commune with him touching this or that verity of the faith, or portion of the Word, was to ensure the rekindling of one's own vitality, the relighting of one's own hopes. He had his little and most quaint peculiarities, of thought, and word, and deed, and at them, even when most solemnised by his settled earnestness, one often clandestinely smiled, yet never without feeling that their absence might, after all, have been a thing to regret.

"Then as to the love his people bore him. That love was indeed widespread and warm. Truly they loved and they listened, yielding him an access to their homes and hearts, which more cultured and more gifted mortals might never have won. Many of us have to complain of the ingratitude of those we may have sought to serve. Not so Joel Mepham. I remember how amused as well as gratified I used to be with the constant little thankofferings he received. A few flowers, an apple or two, a fresh egg from the country, a little home-made loaf, some Passover cake, were among the varieties which Gentile and Jew, Papist and Protestant, amongst the past and present dwellers of the district, were wont to send him. Their money worth was ever small, but not so their moral value; and I believe he delighted in these humble tokens of goodwill more than in the weightier presents of wealthier friends. Many poor aged, halt, and blind ones plodded all the way to Kensal Green to pay the last respect to his remains, and, after the Rev. J. P. A. Fletcher had committed his body to the ground in 'sure and certain hope of everlasting life,' they joined his Mission-brethren and the rest of us in singing that hymn, never more fitly sung than at his grave—

'For ever with the Lord.
Amen! so let it be.'"

THE DINNER MISSION.

Did it ever strike our readers that free dinners to poor little "city arabs" were Missionary agencies of a very practical sort? We don't say that they are as good as a teacher, but we do venture to assert that a free dinner and one teacher are as good as two teachers. The dinner is a great humaniser of the raw material which we have to work amongst.

What a thing it is to be hungry! To be starved—to feel the bitter cold of the air outside our bodies with tenfold force because of the gnawing pains of hunger inside our bodies. Only those who have been thus a hungered and wanting can describe the intensity of the influence for evil this state produces. Some one or more of my readers may have been once hungry, almost to desperation, and have felt the physical pain of it, but this is as nothing to the bitter experience of those who are mostly hungry, and daily feel the sad effect this has upon their characters. It is difficult to estimate the crime that is due to hunger. Not simply the crime committed to obtain food—that is the least part of the evil; but the bitterness of spirit, the callousness, the hardness, the cruelty, the vindictiveness, the passion that a hungry state raises in a man. If there was less starvedness amongst the residuum of society, there would be much less crime. Then think of the idleness habitual half-starvedness produces. At first it may be an incentive to work to earn bread, but in time it makes the body lethargic and the spirit depressed, work becomes a hundred-fold harder to do, and idleness, with all its train of evils, finds a rapid growth in a starved man's character. And none the less so does it affect ignorance. The desire to learn is stunted, as the capacity is limited, by hunger. Starving children, though they may be in a warm and comfortable schoolroom, are not likely subjects to educate. There is no comparison between the fed and the hungry lad as a pupil. The one can be taught, the other is listless and absent. The one may have his mind concentrated on his lesson, but the other, like a hungry wolf, has but one thought uppermost, one idea, one anxiety—how to get food. Food! Food! Food! is the cry of the hungry body, and the mind repeats the cry in constant wonder as to when the cry will be answered. The fed child, being satisfied, has no terrible anxiety causing its mind to wander. Two good dinners a week affect the teachableness of our little ones. Fed, they are better scholars to teach, and better to discipline and manage. We never see starving children without feeling the great responsibility of their being left in such a state. It is a sad one. Unfed whilst young, starved oftener far than fed, hungry times without number, the evil passions of their nature are given impetus, and the easy lesson of idleness is readily learnt; and as they grow older, they work little, starve much, and need to be fed through life by the parish or charity. How sad is this, and yet how much of it might be prevented by two or three dinners a week to these whilst young. The habit of feeding grows, and the necessity for dinner becomes strong in them; and so, as they grow older, they work for their dinners, which have become a part of their life. We would that this bit of the philosophy of dinners was more thought of, and that our readers would ponder over it, talk about it, and have it

canvassed. We had at first, through the kindness of one or two good friends, two dinners a week in winter only, and much good they wrought. We then had two dinners a week all the year round by the aid of the school funds, and great has been the benefit. We wish this to be continued, and so we urge our friends to give us their support. Dinners cost money, and are a charge upon our funds, but if they prepare the soil of our little ones' minds for the sowing of good seed that will bring forth the fruits of Labour, Knowledge, and Righteousness, are they not valuable Missionary aids to our work, and are they not worthy of the support of our friends? We believe they are, and that, figuratively speaking, the cup of water and the piece of bread thus given to the little hungry ones will be seen in heaven, and blessed by Him who accepteth the smallest act of charity and love done in His Name.

Thus far is the publicly expressed opinion and practice of the friends conducting the

NASH GROVE RAGGED SCHOOLS, LIVERPOOL.

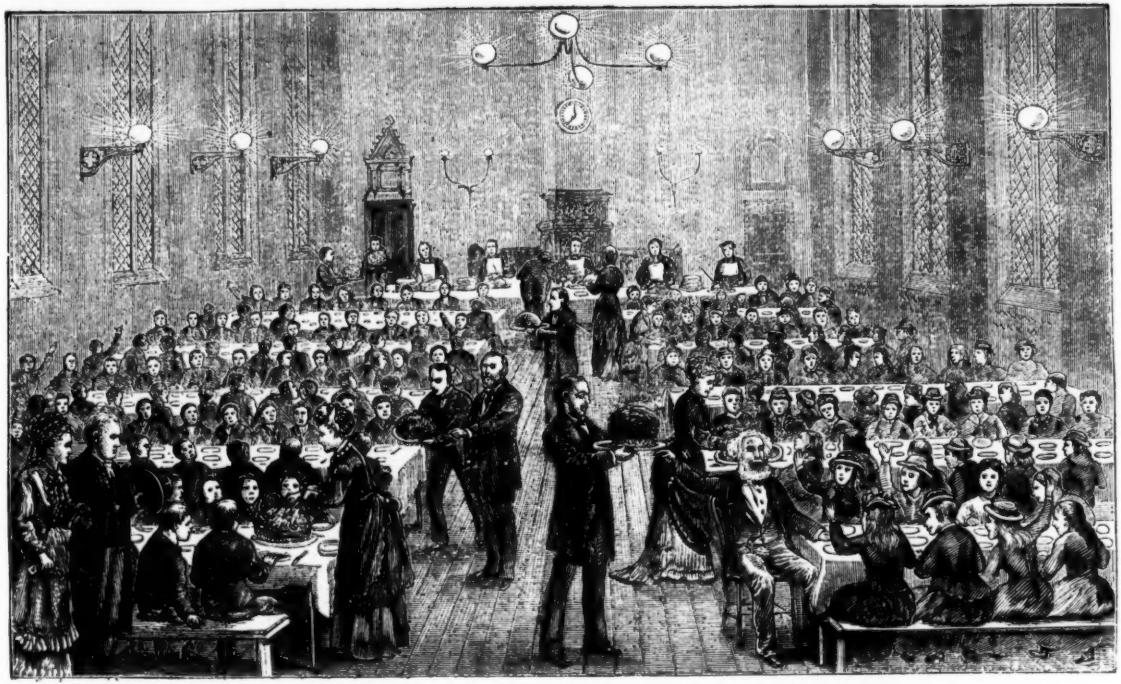
The London workers are at one with their Liverpool brethren; and so convinced were they that they formed a Central Society for the express object of fostering the dinner movement, and designated it

"THE DESTITUTE CHILDREN'S DINNER SOCIETY."

By means of this Society the number of dinners given to the poor children of London during the season beginning with autumn, and ending in the spring, has reached the large number of 141,058. This number, although so large, is not the whole, for many dinner tables are spread in Ragged Schools during the winter not aided by that Society; and more recently an effort has been started by the editor of "Hand and Heart," known as

"ROBIN DINNERS,"

the object of which is the same as that of the Dinner Society, but less systematic. The dinners, or the suppers, are only occasionally given, and partake rather of a special or extraordinary meal than one recurring at fixed periods. On the occasion of one of these Robin Suppers, Sir Robert Carden, who is a City magistrate, presided, and, playing somewhat with the word "Robin," said there was something ominous in their being indebted to "robbing" (Robin) for a dinner; but he forgave the "robbing" (Robin) because it had produced so capital a feast. (Laughter.) Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to assist at such gatherings as these. He remarked upon the utility of Ragged Schools in having taught the children of the poor how to read and write before the formation of School Boards, which, however, could never supersede Ragged Schools. Those schools were as necessary now as ever they were before, because,



A "ROBIN DINNER" AT THE KING EDWARD RAGGED SCHOOL, SPITALFIELDS.

whereas School Board Schools simply afforded a secular education, Ragged Schools imparted religious instruction also, without which education was comparatively void and worthless.

Our illustration gives a fair idea of the Robin Supper as it took place in

The King Edward Schoolroom.

The following descriptive account of this exciting gathering has been supplied by one present on the occasion:—

"Wending our way through some of the narrow thoroughfares at the back of the Whitechapel Road last Tuesday evening, our olfactory nerves were saluted with an ordorous perfume which rose superior to the less fragrant scents of the neighbourhood. It was a savoury smell, such as would cause a hungry man's mouth to water, and smack his lips in delightful anticipation. Following the smell to its source, we arrived at King Edward Street, where, outside the Ragged Schools, we saw an eager crowd of about 200 little folks striving for admittance. On inquiring the cause of the excitement, we were informed that a supper of hot roast beef, baked potatoes, and plum-pudding was to be given at six o'clock to 250 children of the district, and it then wanted but a few minutes to that hour. Awaiting our turn for admission, we made the acquaintance of Mr. C. Montague, the superintendent of the schools, under whose auspices the bountiful fare had been arranged. Thanks to his courtesy, we were passed in and packed away in a spare corner, where we were enabled to see all that transpired. In a short time the children were seated, and their happy expectant faces were a sight to warm one's heart, whilst the noise and hubbub were almost deafening. Silence, however, was soon restored, in order that the Rev. Mr. Tyler might say grace; and shortly after, the attack on the roast beef and potatoes commenced. Four or five expert carvers cut up the meat, which was borne away by a number of assistants to the various tables, so that in a short time nearly every child was provided with a portion. Not all, however, for suddenly there came a cry that the meat was exhausted, a few more than the limited number having obtained admission. The difficulty was soon met by Mr. Montague, who immediately sent to a neighbouring cookshop for a large round of beef, which quickly disappeared like the preceding joints. In the midst of the room the snow-white head of Sir Robert Carden might be seen, his face beaming with satisfaction, and his arm busy in serving out the potatoes from an enormous dish. At other tables were Francis Sherlock, Esq., the Rev. Bevell Allan, and several other friends, who rendered good service in seeing that the youngsters obtained their share of the feast. Presently the clatter of the knives and forks ceased, appetites

began to be appeased, and ripples of laughter resounded through the hall. All at once three ringing cheers were heard, and looking round we perceived the Rev. Mr. Tyler, bearing above his head an enormous plum-pudding, which had elicited this applause of the assemblage. The rev. gentleman was followed by many others equally burdened, and the spicy aroma of the pudding soon pervaded the apartment. Sir Robert, knife and fork in hand, soon demolished the 'monstre' placed at his table, and bountifully helped the juveniles to what they evidently regarded as the best part of the feast. After a time quiet was again restored, and we were then informed that it was owing to the liberality of the Rev. Charles Bullock, the editor of 'Hand and Heart,' that the supper had been provided, and that another 250 were to be regaled the following evening."

These Robin Dinners, given midday or evening, have been supplied to the school children in Golden Lane, Nelson Street, Camberwell, and many others. After the feast at Camberwell had been given, some one connected with the "Food Reform Association" wrote to the editor of "Hand and Heart," who thus replies:—"Since one of our correspondents somewhat solemnly warns us against the 'waste' involved by giving the Robins a taste of Christmas fare in the shape of roast beef, when the cost might feed three Robins on lentil soup, we may state that the bounty of our readers prompted the further bounty of our Camberwell friends, and the united fund pays for the offending 'beef.' We hope our correspondent takes care to feed *his* three robins with 'lentil soup.' We should say the Divine rule applies here, 'Thus ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.' Our object is not mere 'relief,' but to make a 'feast' for those who seldom have one; and we think we have the Master's presence."

THE HOME SECRETARY ON INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

Early in February, the Right Hon. R. A. Cross opened the new buildings which had been erected, at a cost of £14,000, by the Committee of the Essex Industrial Home, towards the expenses of which the County Justices and the West Ham School Board made large contributions. The idea of having such a home in the county originated in 1872 with Mr. Pash, of Chelmsford. Operations were commenced in small houses, and the work so grew that in 1876 it was determined to build suitable premises. Accommodation has been provided for 150 inmates, and at the present time ninety are on the books of the Institution.

After planting some trees, Mr. Cross proceeded to the schoolroom, and

said, before declaring the Home open, he desired to say what inexpressible pleasure it was to him to be present on such an occasion. There were several reasons why that should be so. In the first place, as the head of the department which was charged with administering the law relating to industrial schools, he was glad to take this opportunity of publicly stating the enormous advantage which, in his opinion, these schools were to the country, an advantage of which they did not see the real benefit, perhaps, at the present moment, but which every year they would see more and more of. If they thought of the children who were in the Home, and what they would have been if these schools had not been instituted when they became grown-up men, they would, he was sure, agree that the benefit which had been obtained was more than they could ever have expected. He expressed the pleasure he felt at having been invited to the school at the instance of his friend and colleague, Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson, who had done so much for the school, and on having met its chief promoter, Mr. Pash. The school had begun like many others, and he thought in the right way. It had had small beginnings, and it was only because they had been so successful that the result now to be seen had been achieved. The reports which had been presented to the Home Office were very satisfactory as regarded the results achieved by the Institution, and he was very glad that the only drawback in the reports—want of proper teaching accommodation—had now been removed. He trusted the boys in the school would feel that they had a very comfortable home, would be thankful for the instruction received, and that they would show by their future conduct that that thankfulness was not expressed in words only, but in deeds also.

A luncheon was subsequently held, Mr. Cross in the chair.

The Home Secretary, in proposing prosperity to the school, expressed as his opinion that it was doing good honest work. There were one or two observations which he should like very much to make on the subject of industrial schools.

There was one point which he had no doubt all present were perfectly aware of, but which, from inquiries very often made to him, he was quite sure was not known throughout the length and breadth of the land thoroughly and fully—it was this, and it was of the greatest possible importance—viz., that there was the widest possible distinction between an industrial school such as they had opened that day and the reformatory schools, which also had done so much good. But it was absolutely essential for all those interested in these institutions not to confound the two together, and think they were pretty much the same sort of thing under different names. There was a vital difference between them, which could not be too forcibly expressed or borne in mind when they were treating on this subject. A reformatory school was for the reform of criminals, industrial schools had nothing to do

with criminals whatever. No boy guilty of crime would be sent to that home. Industrial schools were established to step in between the neglect—the gross neglect—of many parents, and the unfortunate circumstances of those boys without parents at all, or any one to look after them, and to prevent the boys from getting to crime. The raw material was ready to be led away by the wickedness of the world, and the industrial schools stepped in and said, "That is not to be; these children, so far as we can prevent it, are never to have the chance of getting into a reformatory school, because we will step in in the first instance before they have begun to tread in the path of ruin."

The second observation which he wished to make upon these schools was this, that the object of them was not to punish, because the boys had committed no fault of their own. It was the fault of others, generally speaking, which brought them to these institutions. The object of the homes was to reform, to reclaim, and to restore—to reform them from the evil habits which necessarily clustered round them, and which would, for a certainty, lead them to crime if the schools did not step in and prevent it; to reclaim them from evil associates, who would force them into crime; and to restore them to a healthy state of moral training, which should show them how, when they grew up, they could become honest members of society and earn their own living.

The third remark he wished to make was on the great results which had already been produced by the industrial schools existing throughout the land. The school at Essex had not been long enough established for its supporters really to reap the benefits of the good seed which they undoubtedly had sown, and were still sowing. But other schools had been longer in operation, and if one compared the number of young criminals who were sent to prison in the year 1856 with what it was in 1878, one would find that whereas in 1856 somewhere about 14,000 of these young, miserable creatures were sent to gaol, in 1878 that number was reduced to about one-half. He did not at all say that 7,000 were at all satisfactory figures, but it showed that they were going in the right direction, and that certainly was something for them to be thankful for.

There was another fact, which might have been unlooked for, but which undoubtedly had worked out in the practice of these schools. That was that it did not now pay the professional thief to get hold of these boys as he used to do. The boys were kept away from the professional thieves so long that they saw they could not reap the benefit of the evil teaching which they would give, and they were, therefore, not anxious to do it. Therefore, as years went on, the result was not only to stop boys going to the thief, but to stop the thief from the wicked education which we read so much of, and which was so vividly displayed in some of Dickens's books years ago, and which he hoped before long would cease throughout this country.

Then, if they followed all the results of these schools, and attempted to trace boys and see what was the effect of the training they had had, the results would be found to be equally satisfactory. He believed that in the cases of reformatory schools about 70 per cent. of

those who had gone through those institutions had practically been reclaimed. But it would be still more satisfactory to know—and it was a matter probably which all would expect—that when they had rescued a boy before he committed crime, the results were even yet more pleasing. Taking it in a rough kind of way, then, of those boys who passed through an industrial school, 80 per cent. were known to have been entirely rescued, reformed, and reclaimed, and were honest members of society. The report of the Middlesex School showed that the percentage of those who had so been reformed, reclaimed, and restored amounted to the large figure of over 88 per hundred. Those were practical results of which every one must see the benefit, and he could not see how any one, looking at these facts and figures, could possibly withhold assistance from such schools when they knew the good which must inevitably result from it. They had grown very rapidly, and he thought at the present time there were in existence about 126 of them, which was not quite, but very nearly, double the number of the reformatories. All this meant money, and so he was told, and by none more so than his friend Sir H. Selwin-Ibbetson. In his capacity his friend told him that he spent too much money, and he replied that he could not help it. He admitted that for this object alone a large sum of money had to be spent. At present the Government paid about £156,000 to these schools, and when the matter was discussed in the House of Commons the difficulty he had was to persuade hon. members to be patient and wait for the results. He was confident of this—that every farthing which was spent in this direction in well-managed schools saved fifty, ay, a hundred per cent., and even more than that, in rates, in gaols, and other matters, besides the moral effect which it had upon the community at large.

He must give them a word of warning about the teaching in the schools. The country did not want these schools to overeducate the children who were sent to them. They should be taught those rudiments of education which would eventually prove of use to the boys, and, above all, they must teach them how in future years to teach themselves. They wanted discipline and moral training, and not high teaching in one particular branch. Above all, it was essential that the teaching should include some industrial knowledge by which, when the lads left, they could provide for themselves and their families.

He wished to give another word of warning to those who, in charity or sitting as magistrates in the execution of their duty, had part in this matter—and that was, they should be careful of the class of children they sent to these schools. They were not to supplant the actual and positive duty of the parents to educate their children. These institutions were for the waifs and strays; they were to rescue children from those parents who would lead them into crime, or whose gross neglect would lead them into crime. They were not to supplant the duty of educating a child, or to take from the parent in any way, or to relieve the parent of any of the sense of responsibility and self-reliance which he ought to take, and which ought to be impressed upon him. The tendency in some

parts of England was to fill the schools with children whose parents were perfectly able, and with a little pressure would be perfectly willing, to take charge of them. If the schools took charge of those children they would be doing a great evil.

Another class of institution that had lately been proposed, and which he believed would bear great fruit, was DAY INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS. In certain districts they would be invaluable, and would greatly relieve the regular industrial schools, and he believed, therefore, that they would soon see the advantage of passing that Act of Parliament. But, excellent as these homes were, admirable as they were, and worthy of all support, still they ought to be the exception and not the rule. They wanted them because there was such an amount of evil in the country; but they must do their best to remove the evil, and he hoped the way in which the Education Acts were now being worked would tend to diminish the need of such institutions. And the greatest happiness which could possibly befall the country would be when the time came that there was no longer any use for institutions of the kind.

LONDON STREET RAGGED SCHOOL AND MISSION, DOCKHEAD.

It not unfrequently happens that efforts made by a single individual of humble origin and with a view only to impart good to others, results in a movement far greater than ever conjectured by the originator, who in his lifetime is scarcely recognised by any person or persons other than those benefited, but possibly his memory may be honoured when his dust is sleeping beneath the churchyard's sacred soil. Such instances have occurred in the case of John Pounds and Robert Raikes, of the Ragged School and Sunday School systems, which have been a blessing to old England, and now more than ever are the glory of our land.

In the present day, however, there is a greater possibility of the general public, or, at least, the Christian public, recognising the self-abnegatory efforts of those who are actively engaged in battling with evil in its worst forms, throw themselves upon the sympathy and support of their fellow-Christians, and, whilst looking to one Almighty and Merciful for that help they so much need, do not forget to remind others of the injunction, "Bear ye one another's burdens," by continually seeking that pecuniary assistance which is so essential in every good work. This has been somewhat the experience of the London Street Mission, which about fourteen years ago was established in a broken-down building in a district once known as Jacob's Island, and immortalised by the late Charles Dickens in connection with the history of Oliver Twist. Improvements have taken place, both sanitary and moral, but yet there remains much to be done, and Mr. Walter Ryall and his band of earnest workers are

doing much to accomplish the moral improvement of those of whom otherwise it might be said that they were uncared for.

This Christian Mission in London Street originated with Mr. Ryall, a North Sea fisherman, who during his apprenticeship of five years was once wrecked and three times washed overboard, but God in His mercy saved him from a watery grave.

In 1858 his wife's illness compelled him to seek his living ashore. After much suffering and want she was taken to her rest, but not till she had been the instrument in leading her sorrowing husband to Him in whom she believed. From that hour till now he has been most untiring in his efforts both with old and young, if by any means he may win them to Christ. On Sunday and on week evening, after his daily work, in season and out of season, he tries to lead sinners to a knowledge of the truth.

His first effort was commenced at a wharf in Tooley Street, where he was employed as a waterside labourer. He invited a few of his mates to tea at his little home, and there told them what Jesus had done for him. In this way several were led to seek the Saviour, and soon four or five Christian men and a few youths from a neighbouring place of worship were banded together for Christian work. They took a small cottage in London Street, at 3s. per week. This was made into one room on the ground-floor, which only gave 18 feet by 11 feet. Some forms were made from egg-boxes, and with a few paraffin lamps the room was made somewhat comfortable for evening meetings.

A Sunday School was commenced, and in a short time 100 scholars and eight teachers were crowded into this small room.

The present number of scholars is about 200. Every year, from the commencement, from 120 to 180 children have been taken into the country; also their parents have had their excursion, giving them one day in the year as a sweet contrast to their unattractive homes. Many of the scholars have been removed by death, leaving most satisfactory evidence that their teachers have not laboured in vain. Others have become consistent members of various Christian churches. A number of very poor boys and girls have been provided with suitable clothing, and placed in situations, one of whom has commenced business on his own account, and now subscribes to the school where he was a scholar. A large number of useful books have been given to the scholors from time to time for good behaviour. Their homes are frequently visited, and where needful, their bodily wants are cared for, which often paves the way to bring religious influences to bear upon them. A Band of Hope has been formed, which has 130 members, many of whom have drunken parents, and, as a matter of course, are sadly neglected as to clothing, food, and education. These are brought together on Wednesday nights

for reading, and once a quarter have a Tea and Entertainment, to which they are allowed to invite their parents. One result has been that several of the parents have been arrested in their evil habits and have joined the Temperance Society. One man sold his home for drink, but since signing the pledge has wonderfully improved, and is very thankful that he was persuaded to become a total abstainer. A costermonger had sold everything for drink; but he was induced to join the Temperance Society, since which he has purchased a good stock of goods and is doing well.

The Night School for poor boys averages 20, several of whom a few months since could not write their own names, but have now made considerble progress both in writing and arithmetic.

A Penny Bank has been started, and thirty-two very poor boys, and nineteen of their parents have joined it, which has enabled some of them to obtain a few tidy clothes, but the amount paid in during the year was only £12 16s. 7d., only a small fraction more than one penny per week each.

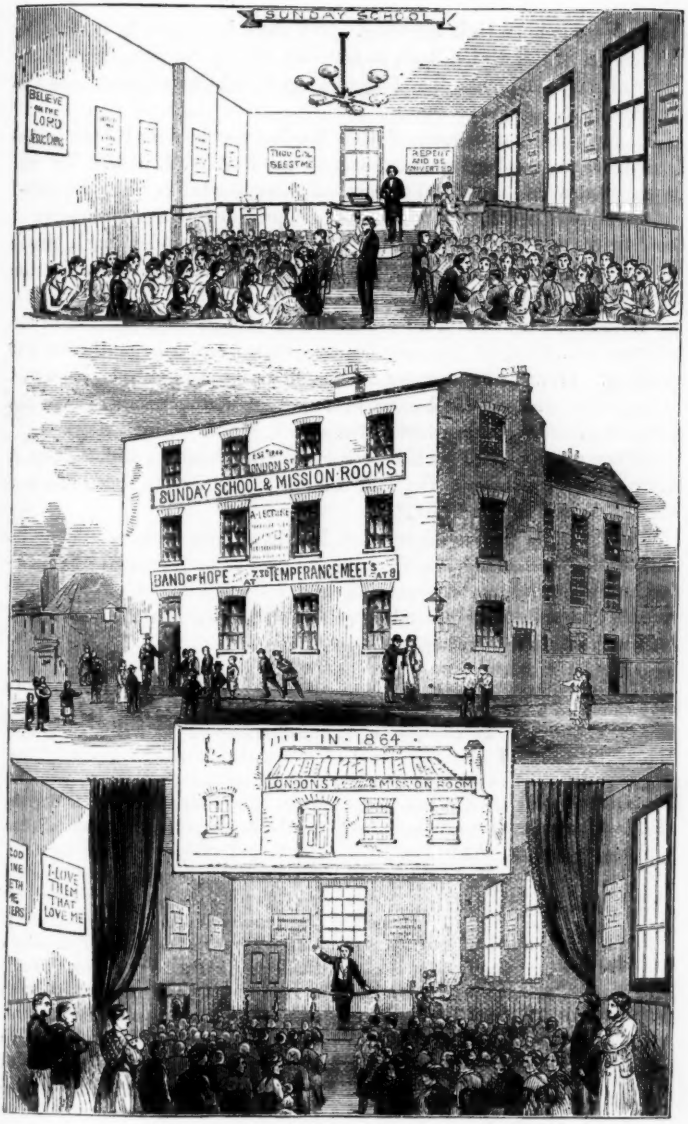
A Service is held every Sunday evening, at which from 80 to 100 attend.

For twelve years a Mothers' Meeting has been conducted by a lady, who has from 40 to 50 women under instruction every week, and there is clear proof that this effort and the Clothing Club have considerably contributed to the comfort and elevation of many families. When the mothers were first assembled, so rough was the conduct of some that the shutters had to be closed, and sometimes the aid of the policeman sought; but now there is comparative quiet and good behaviour. Instances could be named of much temporal and spiritual good resulting from this earnest work. The Gospel Meetings are attended by some who have scarcely anything more than rags to cover them. Their poverty is inquired into before help is rendered, and many a one has been sent home light-hearted with a loaf of bread to their hungry children and a garment to comfort them. These services are conducted by voluntary preachers, three of whom entered Mr. Spurgeon's College, and have become pastors of churches. Four have become city missionaries, and about forty lay preachers in various parts of London, while others have become tract distributors and sick visitors. There is a Working Man's Club, and three years ago a Sunday School Brass Band was started, which often attends the open-air meetings, and is the means of drawing the people together. These meetings are held week-day evenings and Sunday afternoons in the courts and alleys of the neighbourhood. Many of the very poor gladly welcome the friends, and say that these are their only opportunities for hearing of a Saviour's love. Three of these open-air meetings are held on Sunday afternoons, when about 100 are present at each service. Tracts and periodicals are also distributed at these services.

For ten years on Sunday evenings all through the summer one of these open-air services has been held close to Christ Church; from 60 to 100 are always present. For eight years the small room in London Street, already referred to, was all the space at command for carrying on the work. During that time efforts were made to obtain ground on which to build a more suitable room, but without success. In 1872 the adjoining cottage was taken, giving twice as much space and doubling the expenditure. The burden thus increasing with the extension of the work, new friends were sought to help, and Mr. Palmer was urged to become secretary and to aid in collecting the needful funds. The teachers and those taking part in the work at the first paid the rent and other expenses of their little room, as far as possible; the late Charles Curling, Esq., made up the deficiency whenever asked to do so. In 1872 the expenses rose to more than £30 per annum, and as about £13 had to be spent in alteration and repairs of the additional building, it was necessary to ask for outside help. With £5 a year from the Ragged Church and Chapel Union there was but little difficulty in meeting the demands. The two rooms below and one upstairs were a great improvement on the one little room. It soon became apparent, however, that more space and of a better kind was desirable to carry on the work, but the workers did not feel equal to undertake the increased responsibility, and no doubt would have remained contented for a time had not the landlord given notice to quit unless premises, he would build on the site, were taken at a fair rental.

The whole question of accommodation was thus forced upon the attention of the friends, who tremblingly had to consider it. There seemed great doubt as to the path of duty till encouragement came in from Mr. Mead, of the firm of Peek, Frean, and Co., with the promise of £10 yearly if the increased responsibility was undertaken. The rent only of the new building or hall was fixed at £42 per year. Rather than relinquish the work, and with Mr. Mead's kind promise, it was agreed to accept the landlord's proposition. Mr. Percy Brown, Mr. J. T. Daintree, and others giving further encouragement and help, the increased liabilities were undertaken.

On October 5, 1875, the foundation stone of the new building was laid by Percy Brown, Esq., who very liberally assisted in meeting the opening expenses of the new rooms. On May 23, 1876, the new building was opened by a tea and public meeting, presided over by J. B. Mead, Esq., whose kind influence was so timely given. A good many expenses in regard to the inside of the building fell to our lot, so that the balance up to the present time has been on the wrong side. Some of our friends have helped us nobly. We have drawn upon them more than has been comfortable to our feelings, considering the large



MISSION SCHOOL, LONDON STREET, DOCKHEAD.

demands made upon their liberality. We have been greatly assisted by the Ragged School Union, both in materials for our Night School and by a special and other grants. The Ragged Church and Chapel Union has also rendered help.

The fourteenth anniversary of this Mission was held last April in the Drill Hall, Bermondsey, presided over by the Rev. W. L. Bell. Tea was provided, at which about 400 persons sat down, the tables being decorated with some beautiful flowers, which had been provided by a costermonger of the district in which the Mission is situate, such flowers lending a charm to the tables which to the sympathetic mind was increased by the knowledge of their source of supply.

When the tea was over a large influx of visitors took place until the hall was well filled, all the seats being occupied, and a large number left standing. During the evening the band performed several pieces and the children of the school sang in a most creditable manner under the direction of the superintendent of the school, Mr. J. Colby.

When several addresses had been given, the Chairman said, "There is one person somewhere in the hall who I should like to hear say a few words. Where is Mr. Ryall?"

In a minute or two the head of Mr. Ryall was seen moving as he came round the hall towards the platform, and as he presented himself to the assembly the cheers were such as a nobleman might envy; to say that they were deafening is only speaking within the mark.

On the cheers subsiding, Mr. Ryall said:—

Mr. Chairman and friends, I am very thankful to you all. In fact I hardly know how to express my thanks to you. I sincerely trust you were all satisfied with your tea. This meeting may seem to be a large one, but I hope next year the numbers will increase. When I applied for the hall, Mr. Bevington (the owner of the hall) said, "Why, Ryall, you won't fill it." I said, "Perhaps not, but I will try;" and I did try. Ever since London Street Mission has been started I have had but one motto, and I have endeavoured to carry it out, and to you I look for stimulus and strength to fulfil it. With regard to London Street, I feel that we are only just putting in the key, by-and-by the door will open. Some one said to me the other day, "Well, Ryall, what will you do when they pull down all the houses?" I said, "They haven't pulled them down yet, and when they make those improvements they won't pull down all the courts and alleys, because they pay too well." Speculating builders would not build fine crescents by the seaside if they knew as much I do. Why it's the courts and alleys that bring in the 15 per cent. But I must come to the more important point. We want more labourers. There are several classes which have been empty for weeks past, and children who are playing pitch and toss and overing-backs would be glad to come in. You know I am

as artful as they are. If I am not ready I don't ask them in. You must have teachers equal to the scholars. I don't believe in having 100 boys and only two teachers, and perhaps they know not as much as one ought. I was told sixteen years since that I did not know enough, and was advised by a lady to have two years' schooling. Well, perhaps it would have been better for me. She said "*Mr.* Ryall"—that was a new name for me—when folks call me "Mr." I begin to look at them with suspicion to see whether they mean it. "Mr. Ryall, you ought to go to school for a couple of years, and then you would be a good worker." But what could one do when his heart was full of love to his fellow-creatures, a love which was felt after having watched a dying wife for six weeks, and no one to give a thing to her? When I went round the wharves when every one else had gone to try and pick up an odd hour to buy a candle to see my wife die! May God keep you all from such poverty. When it pleased God to call her to Himself, she called me to her and said, "Walter, when will you pray?" And I knew not what prayer meant. The poor make not many friends, if any, and I sat there watching the corpse, as a child sleeping before the fireless grate. I heard as it were a voice saying, "Surely it's time to turn to God now!" and I answered "Yes!" scarcely knowing what took place, but finding afterwards it was my own conscience that spoke. Thanks to His great name, I came to Him; I could not rest until I went to the place where my dear wife had found peace, and since then I have tried to tell what the Saviour has done for me. If it is my downfall that I did not take that good lady's advice, let it still be to Jesus' glory, for there are scores in heaven whose parched lips have been moistened and whose dying sweat these hands have wiped. I know I am ignorant, but I sometimes think that it seems to do me good. Don't contemplate these failings, but continue to support the schools, and while you give your help I will seek to tell a Saviour's love as I have realised it. Don't run away with the idea that there is anything sectarian about the Mission. We know no church or chapel, but endeavour to help everybody. We want to be a help to ministers of every denomination. The other day one of our boys was nearly drowned, and Dr. Pridmore was sent for. I went, not because I was sent for, but because I was interested in the boy. When I got there I found the doctor turning the boy about and pumping his arm, and I said, "Shall I relieve you, sir?" He said, "Yes, you see how I do it;" and I took the boy's arm and pumped away, and the water came out. He wanted help; and just so we try to help the ministers, not presuming to have a will of our own, but leaving all to them. Mr. Williams has given us a guinea. Mr. Palmer, put that down before I forget it. Sometimes my baker's bill comes to 10s. 6d., that's not bad out of 22s., is it? but when the poor folks want a loaf of bread what are you to do? I shall be glad when Palmer says here's £10 we don't want, and it's a present for you, Ryall. It will be more pleasant and profitable than what he said the other Sunday, "Well, Ryall, you want a new coat." Never mind, Camden will make me a new suit by-and-by, when the time comes.

"E'er since by faith I saw the stream
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be till I die."

Now I have to propose a vote of thanks to the chairman. We are indebted to Mr. Bell in every way. It's a privilege to stand at Christ Church corner on Sunday evening, and Mr. Bell rejoices when we get a large meeting outside; you know there is no chance of me getting in, not up to the pulpit, but it is pleasant to see him as he leaves the church, with his lady on his arm, raise his hat and recognise us as labourers for the Master. Have I said enough, sir?

We will only add that the treasurer is Mr. Rogers, Post-office, Dockhead.

BEFRIENDING YOUNG SERVANTS.

THE Annual Meeting of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants was held on February 5th, at the Hall of the Society of Arts, John Street, Adelphi, Lord Aberdare presiding. The aim of the association is to provide friends, guidance, and in some cases material help for the girls who, year by year, leave the large pauper schools of the metropolis for domestic service, as well as for other friendless girls, the late Mrs. Nassau Senior having directed public attention to the friendless condition of workhouse girls. Among those present were Mr. Brand (Speaker of the House of Commons), Mr. Hodgson Pratt, and Mr. Tom Taylor.

The Chairman in his opening address said that the Society, which had been established since 1874, had already made good its claim to be ranked among the most useful institutions of the country. The training given to the girls in the homes of the Society had already had the most satisfactory results, though of course nothing could replace the healthy education and tenderness of a home. The Society had now under its supervision 505 workhouse children and 1,135 friendless girls, making together a total of little less than 1,700 protegées. The receipts of the Society at the central offices were £450, and at the branch offices £458, making altogether £909 2s. 10d., while the expenditure had amounted to £1,366, the balance against them being £456. The Society had, however, been able to meet this charge by availing themselves of considerable gifts of money made to them during the past year. These gifts were of course exceptional, and as a rule they had only the subscriptions of the members of the Society to fall back upon.

Mr. Tom Taylor then moved, "That this meeting approves of the Metropolitan Association for Befriending Young Servants, and pledges itself to support its aims and objects."

Mr. Hodgson Pratt seconded the motion, which, having been supported by Mrs. Burbury and Mr. Corcoran, was unanimously carried.

Mr. Brand, in supporting a vote of thanks to the chairman, proposed by Mr. Holland, said, "I, naturally, my wife being treasurer of this Society, take a financial view of this matter, and I think it important to show that we do good work at a moderate cost. You have heard to-day from the noble lord in the chair that between 500 and 600 friendless girls belonging to the workhouse are looked after by this Society, as also about 1,100 other friendless girls not belonging to the union. That comes to a total of 1,700 girls, the cost of looking after whom amounts to something like £1,700, or about £1 per head. I am bound to say that if the friendless girls of this immense metropolis are to be looked after at anything like a charge of £1 per head, it is not only a good service but a cheap service. I have been induced to say these few words because sometimes societies of this kind make a considerable show, but perhaps do not perform quite so much good work. The noble lord in the chair was kind enough to say a few words in commendation of the part I have taken with reference to this Society. I consider myself that the Society is entitled to public support, but those who ought be thanked principally are not those who find the money but those who do the work; it is to the volunteer ladies connected with the Society that I think our thanks are principally due."

BYE-LAWS OF THE LONDON SCHOOL BOARD.

Last February the School Board for London revised their bye-laws and adopted the following for future guidance:—

I. The first merely defined the terms used, and the others are as follow:—

II. The parent of every child of not less than five nor more than 13 years of age, shall cause such child to attend school unless there be a reasonable excuse for non-attendance. Any of the following reasons shall be a reasonable excuse, namely:—

(*a*) That the child is under efficient instruction in some other manner.

(*b*) That the child has been prevented from attending school by sickness or any unavoidable cause.

(*c*) That there is no public elementary school open which the child can attend within two miles, measured according to the nearest road, from the residence of such child.

III. The time during which every child shall attend school shall be the whole time for which the school selected shall be open for the instruction of children of similar age, including the day fixed by her Majesty's inspector for his annual visit.

IV. Provided always that nothing in these bye-laws—

(*a*) Shall prevent the withdrawal of any child from any religious observance or instruction in religious subjects;

(*b*) Shall require any child to attend school on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which its parent belongs;

Or (*c*) shall have any force or effect in so far as it may be contrary to anything contained in any Act for regulating the education of children employed in labour.

V. And provided always that—

(*a*) A child between 10 and 13 years of age shall not be required by the bye-laws to attend school if such child has received a certificate from one of her Majesty's inspectors of schools that it has reached the sixth standard prescribed by the Government Code.

(*b*) A child between 12 and 13 years of age shown to the satisfaction of the Board to be beneficially and necessarily employed shall not be required by these bye-laws to attend school if such child has received a certificate from one of her Majesty's inspectors of schools that it has reached the fifth standard prescribed by the Government Code.

(*c*) A child between 10 and 13 years of age shown to the satisfaction of the Board to be beneficially and necessarily employed shall not be required to attend school for more than five attendances in each week during which the school is open, if such child has received a certificate from one of her Majesty's inspectors of schools that it has reached the third standard prescribed by the Government Code.

VI. Every parent who shall not observe, or shall neglect or violate these bye-laws, or any of them, shall, upon conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding, with the costs, five shillings for each offence.

VII. Any bye-laws heretofore made under Section 74 of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, or under that section as amended by the Elementary Education Act, 1876, are hereby revoked as from the day on which the present bye-laws shall come into operation.

The foregoing bye-laws, which have the full force of law, will affect the condition of all the elementary school children in the metropolis.

A SUPERINTENDENT'S FAREWELL.

Mr. Gibson at the end of 1878 retired from the superintendence of the Mint Street Ragged School. He had for twenty-one years, with no other breaks than the short summer holidays, given his Sabbath evenings to Christ and poor children. This part of Mint Street, Borough, in which this school was located, is the metropolis of low lodging-houses.

These are now under police supervision, but the time was when the people in them herded together promiscuously as pigs in a sty. From such quarters the children crowded on Sabbath evenings into the neighbouring School, where loving teachers received them. Neither rags, nor dirt, nor unsavoury odours, nor creeping things, nor fear of infection, frightened the chivalrous band from their post; and they had a worthy leader in Mr. Gibson. Like Saul, he was head and shoulders taller than his brethren. Kind but firm, his control was entire and unquestioned. Those who know the early history of the glorious Ragged School work are aware that teachers at times were in bodily peril. On one occasion Mr. Gibson was assailed by roughs, and his shoulder put out. This did not drive him from, but drew him more closely to, his work. He should be looked on as a Christian hero who has won unstained laurels, and earned a right to repose. At a meeting of the teachers held on Friday, January 10th, 1879, the following resolution was passed, which has been carefully written, mounted, framed and glazed, and presented as a memorial of long and faithful service:—

"The teachers of the Mint Street Ragged School deeply regret the resignation of their esteemed Superintendent, W. Gibson, Esq., after the long service of twenty-one years, and beg to assure him of their sympathy and prayers in his retirement, and their assurance that his work of faith and labour of love has not been in vain in the Lord.

"Thanking him for the many marks of kindness they have received at his hands, and trusting they may all meet with him, and hear the Master say to each and to all, 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,'

"Signed on behalf of the teacher,

"G. Raison, Superintendent.

"A. W. Hunt, Secretary."

THE MOTHERS OF ENGLAND.

BY A CLERGYMAN'S WIFE.

"Take this child away and nurse it for Me, and I will give thee thy wages."—Exodus ii. 9.

"Take this child and nurse it for Me,"
Thus the kindly princess spoke,
As the lovely weeping infant,
In her breast soft pity woke.
"Take this child and nurse it for Me,"
English mother, hear God say,
'Tis a jewel I confide thee,
Do not cast the gem away.

"Take this child and nurse it for Me,"
Shrink not from the holy task.
Help and guidance will be given
By your Father, if you ask.
Tell the little one of Jesus,
How He died his soul to free,
Let him hear of God's compassion,
Seated on his mother's knee.

Let not harshness, English mother,
Rudely crush the tender shoot,
Nor an overweening fondness
Hinder you the weeds t' uproot.
View that lad in convict prison,
See that lovely girl a wreck;
Miseries, perhaps averted,
By kind words or timely check.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me;"
Think—within your loving arms,
There may lie the mighty statesman,
Or the orator that charms;
Better still, the gifted preacher,
Winning thousands for his Lord,
Or the patient missionary,
Lab'ring hard in fields abroad.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me;"
He may like his Saviour be,
Daily toiling in the workshop,
In the field, or factory;
Or perhaps a lowly servant,
In the mansions of the great.
Godly English mother, train him
For the Lord, whate'er his state.

"Take this child, and nurse it for Me;"
Fathers, mothers, oh! arise,
With a gentle, loving firmness,
Rear your children for the skies.
Fearless launch them on life's ocean,
Having well performed your part,
With the Saviour for their "Captain,"
And the Bible for their chart.

SOMERS TOWN.

TESTIMONIAL TO MISS CRIBBIN.

FOR the long period of twenty-one years the Mothers' Meeting and Womens' Sick Benefit Club has been most efficiently conducted by Miss Cribbin, first in the Agar Town building, and, when that was taken by the Midland Railway, in the Somers Town rooms. The Club being large and popular, the amount of work and responsibility resting on the voluntary manager, Miss Cribbin, was somewhat serious, and after twenty-one years' successful labour the time came for a change; but the members of the Club were not willing to part with their kind and faithful friend without giving expression to their own feeling of gratitude towards her. They therefore convened a meeting, at which eighty members attended, when they presented Miss Cribbin with a workbox and writing-desk combined, and with it the following letter:—

"January 7th, 1879.

"We, the members of the Somers Town Ragged School Mothers' Meeting, have much pleasure in contributing towards and presenting a trifling gift to our beloved and esteemed secretary and treasurer, Miss Cribbin, for her unremitting services to and for us, upon her retiring from the work.

"Long life, health, and prosperity, and a blissful entrance into the heavenly kingdom, is the earnest prayer and desire of all the members of the said meeting.

"Signed and presented on behalf of the members, this 7th of January, 1879."

TURKISH BATHS FOR THE POOR.

MR. SAMUEL CURRY writes from 282, Goswell Road, and says:—I am desirous of benefiting the very poor and afflicted of mankind this winter. I have striven to do so for the last sixteen years. Having made Turkish Baths my particular study, I am bound to state that the amount of good arising from such institutions is incalculable. After so many years of practical experience I am duly impressed with the importance of the working and poorer classes frequenting Turkish baths. Through giving free Turkish baths to the poor afflicted with rheumatism, gout, dropsy, &c., I have alleviated the sorrows and sufferings of hundreds, and entirely cured

very many sad diseases. I have much pleasure in stating that any poor afflicted persons may come and receive the benefit of my Turkish baths, free of charge, also that I will give them tar pills and tar ointment—medicines acknowledged by the faculty and Bishop Berkeley to be unsurpassed.

Notices of Meetings.

CANTERBURY RAGGED SCHOOLS.

In February last the children attending this school partook of their winter treat. The schoolroom, which has just undergone repair, was tastefully decorated with evergreen, the gift of Joshua Cox, Esq., and Messrs. Kinmont and Kidd, who also gave a tree, which, heavily laden with toys, &c., kindly sent by Mrs. Foreman, Mr. Fullagar, and Mr. Page, formed a prominent object. At half-past four about eighty children sat down to a good substantial tea, after which they were dismissed until half-past six, when they were again admitted with their parents and friends to be entertained with a lantern exhibition in two parts; firstly a series of African missionary scenes, interspersed with hymns, sung from being shown through the lantern; secondly, several comic slides, and which caused much amusement and fun. This over, short addresses were delivered, and then each child was presented with one or more warm garments, the gifts of friends, supplemented with a toy, &c., from the tree. On leaving, through the generosity of Mrs. Crump, Mrs. Nixon, and Mr. K. Fullagar, fruit and sweets were freely distributed, and oranges, the gift of Mr. Gifford and others, were handed round. Great praise is due to the teachers for the admirable manner in which the treat was carried out.

KING EDWARD INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

The annual meeting of the Girls' Refuge and Home for Young Servants connected with the King Edward Industrial Schools was held on March 10th. The Homes, situate in Albert Street, Mile End New Town, and Andrew's Road, Cambridge Heath, furnish accommodation for about 210 girls, principally received from the City and metropolitan police-courts, the waifs and strays of the metropolis. The girls are educated and trained with the view of fitting them for domestic service, and at the age of sixteen are provided with an outfit, and sent to suitable situations, a kindly care being exercised over them for some time after they have left the Refuge. As some fifty or sixty young servants leave the Home yearly it is proposed, when funds will allow, to erect a building to serve as a temporary Home for Young Servants, who, from ill-health, want of friends, change of situations, &c., at times require a temporary home.

The Right Hon. the Earl of

Shaftesbury occupied the chair, and the hon. secretary read the report. This was an interesting document, dealing generally with the result of the Industrial School movement. It was remarked that the Home Secretary recently publicly stated "that juvenile crime has been reduced one-half since 1856, as the commitments of children under 16 years, which were 14,000, were in 1878 but 7,000." Encouraging as these figures were, the report remarked that it was still a startling fact that 7,000 children in one year in England enter upon what may be a life of crime. Nevertheless the results achieved, taking everything into account, showed a diminution of three-fifths in 22 years by laying hold of those who otherwise would inevitably swell the ranks of the criminal class. Taken generally, the results, as compiled by H.M. Inspector, were as follows: 82 per cent. known to be doing well, 9 unknown, 8 doubtful, 1 reconvicted; while of the girls sent from this particular institution, out of 51 sent to service 40 were doing well, 5 were doubtful, 1 was unknown, 3 had died, 1 had been convicted, and 1 was in the infirmary. The average number in both houses during the year had been 210. The report acknowledged the great assistance and bountiful hospitality of Mr. H. R. Williams (the treasurer) and Mrs. Williams, and also referred in terms of high eulogy to the self-denial, zeal, and ability shown by the Misses Dunkinson and Gotto, the matrons, the Misses Matthews and Cyster, the teachers, and the sub-matrons and assistant teachers in the discharge of their duties.

Mr. H. R. Williams, the treasurer, presented the financial statement, and fully explained to the audience the nature of the alterations it was desired to make at a cost of £2,141. Beyond this there would be extras which would make the total at least £2,500, and a still further £600 for a playground. Towards this about £1,325 had been received, and £500 had just been voted by the School Board for London after an inspection of the premises.

At the conclusion of the treasurer's statement a presentation of six handsome volumes was made by the chairman to Miss Dunkinson, the matron, as an expression of the committee's esteem and appreciation of the faithful discharge of her duties during the fifteen years she has been connected with the schools and the Home.

Rev. W. Tyler then briefly but appropriately reminded the meeting of the services rendered by Mr. Lloyd, the hon. secretary, and requested his lordship to present that gentleman, on behalf of the committee, with the complete works and life of Lord Macaulay, in ten volumes, amid applause.

The noble chairman accompanied the presentation with some complimentary remarks relative to the services rendered by

Mr. Lloyd, who then returned thanks for himself and Miss Dunkinson, the matron, and alluded to the thirty-two years it had been his privilege to be associated with Ragged School and Industrial School work, and declared his continued interest in it, notwithstanding it had grown to such an extent as to take up a considerable amount of time.

The addresses were given by Rev. R. H. Lovell, Rev. Josiah Viney, Rev. R. C. Billing, Alderman Sir R. W. Carden, Rev. J. De Kewer

Williams, and Professor Tomlinson. On thanks being voted to the noble earl, his lordship, in acknowledging the vote, said juvenile crime had been much diminished in the period from 1856 to 1878, and of the honour of bringing about that result the Ragged School movement had a right to claim a vast proportion. Ragged Schools were conducted on the principle of kindness and love, and thousands of children had not heard a word of kindness until they entered a Ragged School. The School Board did a useful and effective work, but he was sure that unless children were brought up on that principle, and were carefully superintended not only in but out of school, crime and sin could not abate; though they might change their character, they would continue rife. There might be less noise in the streets, less external violence—less of that which would come easily under the notice of the police and be easily stated in the records of crime. But there would be a multiplication of secret fraud and deceit, and combination for the purposes of deceit and fraud would increase rapidly, and tens of thousands of cases would occur which would escape the grasp of the law. His lordship considered that institution of great importance, as training a number of young neglected girls to become domestic servants; but expressed the hope that the managers would not offer too many inducements for parents to get their children sent to such institutions. Applauding the movement, his lordship, in conclusion, declared that he could not entertain for any human being greater respect or affection than for Ragged School teachers, who realised in their own hearts the saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

BRACKLEY STREET, GOLDEN LANE.

This school and mission is worked and supported by the Young Men's Missionary Association connected with Messrs. Morley, Wood Street, Cheapside, the annual meeting of which was held on February 24 at the warehouse in Wood Street. S. Morley, Esq., M.P., presided. From the report of the missionary, it appeared that never had the working power of the Mission and its capacity for further services been more manifest. It was also shown that, in consequence of the City authorities having acquired a large block of property south of Brackley Street, which they propose to appropriate to dwelling-houses, containing about 17,000 rooms suitable for the labouring poor, at low rents, the utility of the Mission would be as great as ever. Mr. Minchin further stated that the personal service so cheerfully and acceptably rendered by a large number of friends from 18, Wood Street in the various branches of the Mission was most hopeful and cheering. The religious services held on Sunday mornings and evenings, and on Wednesday evenings, had not only been well attended, but had proved a manifest source of comfort to those who had gathered together for worship. The house visitation, it was hoped, had been fruitful in temporal as well as spiritual blessings. During the winter, 720 tickets for bread, coals, and groceries, had been distributed. Left-off clothes had also been given away. There had been a satisfactory increase of boys and girls in the Sunday School. The Day School had now been recognised by the Education Department, and certified as an efficient elementary school. There were now 180 children on the

books, with an average attendance of 135. Mrs. Smith continued the Mothers' Meetings. At the fortnightly meetings of the Christian Association, addresses had been given having reference to the duties and responsibilities of the Christian life. There had been an increase in the receipts of the Penny Bank during the past year, the number of deposits being 6,985. Summer excursions had also been organised—one to the Zoological Gardens and another to Walthamstow. A Cookery Class had been established, but regret expressed that that had not been better attended. Donations of £5 each had been forwarded to the Church, the London, the Baptist, and the Wesleyan Missionary Societies, and the London City Mission.

Mr. S. Morley, M.P., the chairman, remarked on the pleasure he felt at being associated with a body of young men who, while doing their daily business most efficiently, as he could testify, were at the same time interested in the spiritual improvement of their poorer neighbours. It was the duty of every Christian to help up others. This was their twenty-fifth year of existence, and it was interesting to see what great results had grown from small beginnings. He was glad to find that their services had been appreciated. There was great scope for them. They had sent real joy to many a home. Nothing showed the value of the work more than the house-to-house visitation; the calling on the poor, not in the spirit of dogmatism, but with sympathy. Christian churches of all denominations if they did not do that missed their way. They needed, as Judge Talfourd said, to learn how to bridge over the gulf between the rich and the poor. The day would come when they would be regarded not for their worldly position, but for the life they led. The people amongst whom they worked were very poor, and a word of kindness would be especially welcome to them. When he was a young man the late Mr. Binney had urged him to connect himself with some work outside his own commercial life, and he (Mr. Morley) had great faith in that, and he hoped those not engaged in the work would join in it, as there would be ample room for them all when the new building was completed. He was not quite sure that there was so much zeal in the house as there was twenty-five years ago. He had no wish to dictate to them. It was their work, and not that of the firm, who gave readily to it; but he was specially anxious that the younger men in the establishment would join in the work. Their seniors could do much good in advising them to do so. They could find a great reward in it. He was there not to dictate, but to stimulate, but he felt a religious young man might help his associates. Religion did not consist in reading a tract behind a bale of goods in business hours. On the contrary, he had found Christian young men to be better in business than others, and City men had made the same remark to him.

FOX COURT.

The annual gathering of parents and friends in the ancient Hall of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn (kindly lent by the Benchers), took place on Tuesday, the 18th March, when upwards of 350 fathers and

mothers sat down to a "meat tea," during which they were highly pleased with the performances of the Holdfast Handbell Ringers, who volunteered their services upon the occasion. Tea being over and grace sung, the chair was taken by the Right Hon. the Earl of Shaftesbury, K.G., and the programme of the evening commenced with the hymn, "Oh, worship the King." Prayer was then offered by the Rev. J. H. Moran, and after the hon. secretary had called the attention of the parents to the various classes and meetings held at the schools for themselves and their children, the Rev. Alex. Taylor, chaplain of the Inn, in the name of the Benchers, welcomed the parents to their beautiful hall, which, he said, was opened 300 years ago by Queen Elizabeth, who came in state attended by her nobles, and there had since been great and festive gatherings, but he did not think any of them had been greater than the present.

The Rev. A. J. Bridgman, addressing the parents, advised the wives to make their homes happy and tidy, and gave them advice to show them how they could do so and what good must result from it, both to husbands and children. The hymn, "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy," was then sung, and the Rev. R. C. Billing having briefly addressed the meeting, the noble chairman (who was suffering from a severe cold) said that he ought not to have been there that evening, but he wished to show that he would keep his promise to them at whatever inconvenience to himself; and as he knew that people as a rule did not like excuses, he would not disappoint those he saw before him; in fact, he would rather disappoint all the fine folk in the world than those who belong to the Fox Court Ragged School. He could only say that he had listened with great satisfaction to all that had been said, and hoped they would take to heart the advice given them. Let them do all they could to improve the time, and above all things let them impress on young people above the age of thirteen the necessity of attending night school. The night schools under the charge of the Ragged School, and of superintendents and directors such as they had at Fox Court, would soon be the only places where they would have true and evangelical religion taught. Now the opportunity is open the time may be improved and turned to account. They had many advantages which were not available when he (the noble earl) was a young man. Then there were not many who went into the alleys and courts to see how they could drag them forth in order to impart temporal and spiritual instruction, and they should not be slow to take advantage of this. The noble earl concluded by saying that if he were to speak till midnight he could not say more than that he prayed God to bless them and their work in time and eternity.

The addresses were interspersed with a selection of pieces sung by members of the Fox Court Singing Class and performances by the Handbell Ringers.

After a vote of thanks to the Bell-ringers, the Benchers, and to the noble chairman, had been passed, a very pleasant evening was brought to a close by singing the National Anthem, and the Benediction having been pronounced by the Rev. Alex. Taylor, the company dispersed.

PRESENTED BY THE COMMITTEE OF THE
Ragged School Union
In Conjunction With
Ragged School
To
TOGETHER WITH A PRIZE OF SEVEN SHILLINGS & SIXPENCE
FOR HAVING RETAINED A SITUATION WITH GOOD CHARACTER
FROM THE EMPLOYER MONTHS ENDING CHRISTMAS, 1878
President
Secretary

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